

Living **BLACK JACK** **THE LEGEND**

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Operation Polar Bear

2-12 INF & III Kings

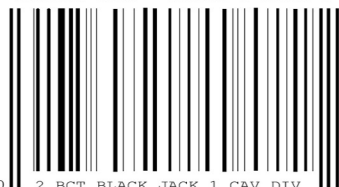
ZBSTB'S ICE TEAM

3/5/6 MITT



Strykers on patrol

JANUARY 2007 - VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1



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Official Magazine of 2BCT, 1CD

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**Cover Photo: A Soldier with
2-12 IN pulls security in the
Al Doura marketplace.**

Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison

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B

lack Jack Soldiers and Leaders welcome to Iraq.

On Oct. 27, we uncased our brigade's colors on the new "Black Jack Field" at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. This is the tenth time our colors have been uncased to fight our nation's wars. The battle streamers it bears of the many hard fought campaigns should be cause for reflection on those great Black Jack Soldiers who came before us.

Like those campaigns before, this will be a historic year for Black Jack; it will be a historic year for each of you for many reasons. For many of us it will be the most memorable, most demanding and the toughest year of our lives.

Soldiers, your leaders will demand more of you than ever before; Leaders, your Soldiers will need you more than ever before. You will be challenged mentally, physically and spiritually. Harden yourselves for the challenges ahead and learn to rely on and care for each other. Combat is a team effort and no one who tries to take on all the tests that lie ahead alone will succeed.

Leaders, you must know and live *TIPS*.

- Talk to your Soldiers.
- Keep them Informed.
- Be Predictable.
- Be Sensitive to individual needs.

Your Soldiers will need you -- be the leader they deserve. All of us must remember the Division Power Thought -- "I Can Save My Own Life".



BLACK JACK SIX



COL B ryan Roberts

In this year of transitions, we will work with the Iraqi Security Forces and the government of Iraq to reestablish critical infrastructure and to provide a safe and secure environment for effective, self-governance and growth as a nation. This mission is all about PEOPLE; we will meet both good and bad ones. We will help the good, offering our assistance at every chance. We are trained and ready to deal with the bad. In the end, we want Baghdad to be a better place because we were here.

In conclusion, I want again to stress the Black Jack Charge or five P's. Everyone of you must remain Positive, Polite, Professional, Prepared to Help and Prepared to Kill. The Black Jack Charge remains the key to our success as a brigade. Live it and make it your guidepost for this historic year ahead.

Black Jack 6 -- Out!

Bryan J. Roberts

Color uncasing marks beginning of 'historic' year for Black Jack

2nd BCT PAO Staff
Photo by Cpl. Robert Yde



Col. Bryan Roberts (left) and Command Sgt. Major James Lee uncase the brigade's colors at Camp Buehring, Kuwait Oct. 27

Col. Bryan Roberts, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's commander, had all his battalions present for a ceremony that marked the beginning of the brigade's operation in Iraq on an empty piece of desert he referred to as "Black Jack Field" at Camp Buehring, Kuwait Oct. 27.

"On 28 September, on Cooper Field at Fort Hood, Texas, we cased our colors. It was a great Central Texas morning," said Roberts. "Today, we uncase our colors on 'Black Jack Field,' in Camp Buehring, Kuwait."

Since Aug. 29, 1917, 2nd Brigade has cased and uncased its colors 10 times through World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq and now in Kuwait again.

Like many of the other campaigns before this one, Roberts anticipates it to be "historic," at the least. "This will be a very, very historic year for Black Jack; It will be a historic year for each and every one of you," he said. "It'll be a historic year for many reasons."

"For many of us, this will be the most memorable, the most demanding and the toughest year of our lives. Know leaders, that your Soldiers will ask more of you than ever, ever, ever before," he continued. "You'll ask more of yourselves than you've ever asked. You'll demand more of yourself, you'll get more of yourself, and you'll know more about yourselves. And you're ready for that. This is what we've been training for since 8 July when we stood on Cooper Field, and with mass changes of command took charge of this formation. This is what we've been training for."

During its time in Kuwait, the Black Jack Soldiers will go through training designed specifically for missions in Iraq.

"We're honing our skills here, so when we go up north, we're prepared for the fight," he said. "Make the most out of what we're doing here in Kuwait."

Roberts also stressed to his Soldiers that they should also recognize their other mission of helping the "good."

"There are a lot of good people in Iraq; we'll make it a lot better for them," he said.

In Roberts' final remarks, he reminded his Soldiers of his "Black Jack Charge" of being positive, polite, professional, prepared to help and finally, being prepared to kill.

"That's what we stand for as a brigade," Roberts said. "That's what makes 'Black Jack' unique. If we do those five things, we will accomplish our mission everywhere we go. That's my challenge to you."

The Black Jack Charge

Be :

- Positive

- Polite

- Professional

- Prepared to Help

- Prepared to Kill

A Soldier from the 2-12 IN works on getting into a building in the Al Doura market in Baghdad Dec. 23.



OPERATION GLADIATOR 'SWEEPING' SUCCESS FOR 2-12 IN

*Story and Photos by
Spc. Alexis Harrison*

It doesn't rain often in Iraq. When it does, the ground turns to a sloppy mess of mud that attaches itself to anything it comes in contact with.

Despite being rained on and covered in mud up to their ankles, Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, braved more than the weather to make sure Operation: "Gladiator" was a success. Not just for them, but for the locals counting on the businesses and shops to reopen.

The operation centered its effort in the ever-dangerous Al-Doura marketplace. Soldiers from 2-12 IN have already been patrolling the streets for several weeks, and they've already had their share of adversity. Dozens of roadside bombs, mortar attacks and small-arms fire fights have erupted in the same area where hundreds of businesses used to be. However, despite the dangerous conditions, the infantry battalion rose to the challenge.

According to the battalion commander, Lt.

Col. Stephan Michael, the market used to be a place where business flourished until sectarian violence dispersed the locals living and working there.

He said that his battalion's mission is as simple as taking the area back from anti-Iraqi forces and bringing it back to life.

"Right now it's an abandoned area," Michael said. "It's been an area thought to harbor insurgents. There have been more than 20 IED's found and 15 murders there just since we've been here. We're hoping to root out the insurgents and establish security."

The Soldiers left Forward Operating Base Falcon while a driving rain poured into the hatches on their Humvees.

Their first stop was at the headquarters for the National Police who accompany the troops on missions. While staging their vehicles, mortars rained into the police base making it very clear that AIF were in the area.

Staff Sgt. Dominic Nolan, a squad leader

with Company C, 2-12 IN, said mortars were nothing new to him. His vehicle had been destroyed a few days earlier by three of them. Fortunately, he and his comrades came away from the incident unharmed - unlike the truck they used to have.

The Soldiers rolled out with their Iraqi counterparts to the market. As soon as they arrived, the work began.

They had to check every room in every building on the block they were assigned. Though they didn't know what to expect, they did know what they were looking for. Before they could clear the first block, they found several signs of insurgent activity.

Three unexploded artillery rounds were found inside one of the stores. As quickly as they found it, they cleared the building and called the explosive ordnance disposal team to come pick it up.

Nolan's squad kept moving and searching the vacant buildings where a busy network of bartering and haggling once took place. Not long after they found the ordnance, a family was found still living in one of the dismal-looking apartments above an empty shop.

The team found a suspicious bottle with wires coming out of it, but it turned out to be nothing. The family was allowed back into its home, and the Soldiers moved on.

The Co. C, "Chosen" made quick work of the block they were assigned to. Without missing a beat, the company moved on to the next block, then the next, the next and the next until they completed almost five

blocks of searching. It was five times the amount they had planned on doing, but the Soldiers finished nonetheless.

Nolan remarked that it was one of the longest missions he'd ever been on. Although it was arduous, his squad kept vigilant and completed the task.

"These guys did what they were supposed to do," Nolan boasted about his squad. "It may not have been as glamorous as finding Saddam, but we found what we were looking for, and no one got hurt."

Sgt. Gordon Wade, an Andover, Mass., native and team leader in Nolan's squad, said that long missions like "Gladiator" can be difficult for Soldiers especially this time of year.

Nolan was just married before he deployed with 2-12 IN. He hopes to be home on leave in a few weeks to be with his wife for the birth of their first baby girl. He said that although he's not home for the holidays, he'll be happy just to know his daughter comes into this world healthy.

After more than 12 hours on the streets of Doura Market, the troops' mission was complete and was deemed a success by their commander.

"One of the toughest parts now is getting in contact with the civic leaders and business owners to let them know things have changed," Michael said. "Once people see that it's safe, they'll start to come back."

During a sweep of the Al-Doura market, Soldiers from 2-12 IN stop to talk to a local resident about problems in the area.



provides safe travel through Baghdad

Story and Photo by
Cpl. Robert Yde

"The assignment of this mission was a bit of a change-up from what I expected, and certainly what we trained for at the NTC (National Training Center)," Lt. Col. Michael Tarsa, the commander of the 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, said regarding the mission his battalion received shortly before deploying to Iraq in mid-October.

Instead of conducting a traditional field artillery unit mission, the Soldiers of 3-82 FA were assigned the mission of providing VIP escort services for government officials who need to travel from the heavily fortified International Zone into Baghdad.

"Our mission is to mainly escort State Department personnel to various places in Baghdad," explained 1st Lt. P.J. Decareau, a platoon leader with Battery A, 3-82 FA.

The native of Boston said that the majority of these escort missions, dubbed the "Red Dragon Express," are for meetings with Iraqi government agencies such as the Ministry of Oil and Ministry of Interior.

Having its field artillery unit take over the escort mission was a natural decision for the command of the "Black Jack" Brigade, according to Tarsa.

"The previous brigade had its artillery filling this mission set, so the logical transi-

tion was to us," Tarsa explained. "Regardless, this is what 'Black Jack' needed the battalion to assume, and that's the only thing that mattered to us."

After learning of his battalion's mission, Tarsa restructured his entire unit so that it would be better suited for its new mission.

"The first task for me was one of reorganization," Tarsa explained. "I gutted my headquarters battery and forward support company to create five, 16-man platoons. I then directed my two firing batteries to reorganize into six platoons each and provided them additional officers to ensure each was led by a capable lieutenant."

Once the new structure of the battalion was set, the types of training exercises the "Red Dragon" Soldiers were conducting had to be adjusted.

"Originally, we thought we would own some land, so we started getting ready to maneuver as an

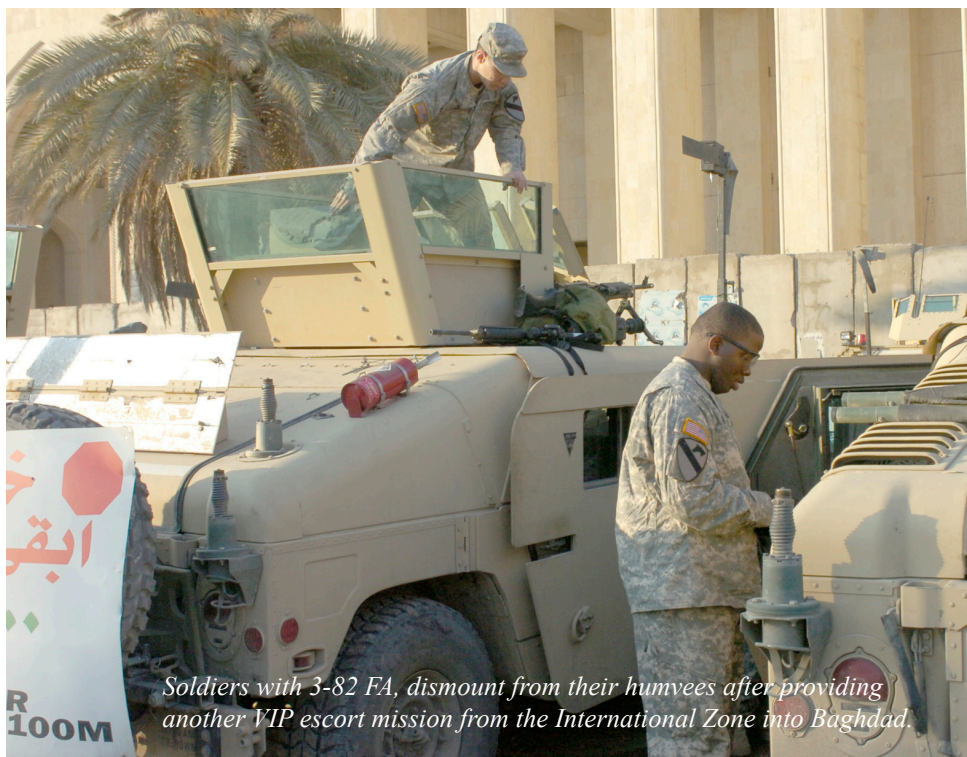
infantry unit," said Decareau, explaining the battalion's initial training preparations for Iraq. "We were ready to do a mounted maneuver mission."

For most of the Soldiers, learning that they would be providing VIP escorts around Baghdad, instead of conducting patrols, was a bit of a surprise.

"It was kind of a shock at first," said Pfc. Ken O'Connell, a Boston native who is now serving as a humvee gunner. "We trained for something totally different. Then you get here and find that it's a whole new ballgame."

According to Decareau though, receiving the new mission was an easy adjustment because their training already focused on patrolling in humvees.

"They were ready to get in humvees and get out in the streets," he said. "It's not really too much different than patrolling a sector. The only difference is there is some kind of principle you've got to take along with you."



Soldiers with 3-82 FA, dismount from their humvees after providing another VIP escort mission from the International Zone into Baghdad.

The Black Jack Bump™



Top 10 reasons why the Bump is better than shaking hands:

10. You don't need all your fingers to execute the Bump.
9. You can do it with either hand.
8. It's easy. There's only one step.
7. It's not offensive to do it with gloves on.
6. You keep the spirit of the Wonder Twins alive.
5. It'll never be a death-grip competition of your manhood.
4. IAW FM 21-10, it's just plain sanitary.
3. You don't have to make actual contact. It can be done thru an M1114 up-armored HMMWV window. The love's the same.
2. There's no question about when to let go.
1. It even makes the field grades look cool.

Assuring that their principles can travel safely around Baghdad in order to conduct meetings with Iraqi government officials is crucial for the future of Iraq.

"The safe transport of Department of State and MNFI (Multi-National Force Iraq) principals is a condition-setting effort toward creating a more stable, secure Iraq," Tarsa explained. "The meetings that our principals attend contribute directly to the infrastructure development here in Iraq."

Once the convoy arrives to its location, the majority of the Soldiers pull outside security, while a small team escorts the principles inside, serving as their personal security detachment and providing communication with the Soldiers still outside.

With multiple missions every day, the "Red Dragon Express," runs like a well oiled machine, however, Sgt. Derrick Martin concedes that it took his Soldiers a little time to get to where they now are.

"When we first started going out, my guys used to be a little shy," the Spindale, N.C. native said. "I had to tell them every little thing to do, but now I see them growing and developing."

Martin, who is in charge of the lead gun truck in one convoy, said that he has seen his gunner, Pfc. Ronald Wise, develop a lot more confidence in carrying out his role.

According to Martin, Wise has become very efficient at controlling the traffic and keeping it at a safe distance from the convoy.

"My job is to just clear the lane and make sure nothing's in the way," Wise explained.

From his turret, Wise constantly scans the road for bombs or any-

thing that looks out of the ordinary, while ensuring that people and vehicles keep their distance from convoy.

"Everybody's in a hurry, they don't want to wait behind the convoys, and that will put your convoy in danger," Wise said.

"You've got to do whatever it takes to make sure that the people do what you want them to do, not what they want to do."

Wise takes his role as lead gunner very seriously because he said if he misses something, then it could endanger somebody's life in his convoy.

While Soldiers such as Wise provide security for the convoy while its traveling, other precautions are taken before the convoy ever leaves the International Zone.

"A big part of our continued success will be our ability to read changes in the threat, enemy adaptations and carefully manage our movements to keep from setting signature patterns," Tarsa said.

As the "Red Dragon Express" continues to move government officials safely around Baghdad, Tarsa said he knows that it is his Soldiers, who, without complaint or skipping a beat have stepped into their new role and made this mission successful.

"The 'Red Dragons' have claimed this mission as their own," Tarsa said. "They are doing great things each and every day."

Sgt. Derrick Martin watches as his Soldiers go over a map of the route for their escort mission Dec. 18.



4-9 MITT, IA, IP

JOIN FORCES ON

Story and Photos by
Spc. Alexis Harrison

HAIFA ST.

The 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment's Military Transition Team has been overseeing operations performed by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division for more than two months now. According to leadership from the MiTT, the army has been steadily improving. To effectively double the law enforcement, another group of Iraqis stepped up to join into the fight to take back the Haifa Street area.

On Dec. 28, the Iraqi Army battalion teamed up with police from the Al-Jeafer Police Station for a joint operation to seize high-value targets and show the locals they had a police force they could count on.

The police and IA stormed the buildings of an area where intelligence resources reported the wanted men were staying. Unfortunately, none were found, but Norrie said finding high-value targets wasn't necessarily what it was all about.

Norrie, a Barton, Vt. native, said that the operation between the police and army was the first step in building a relationship that would hopefully lead to future joint operations.

According to Norrie, the operation was the first time in more than 16 months that Iraqi police and army

have worked together in this area.

"The IA and IP are much stronger together than they ever would be if they were apart," Norrie said. "It's been a long time since IP's have done a search, a raid or any kind of joint opera-



The 4-9 MiTT commander, Maj. Chris Norrie, speaks to an Iraqi police captain during a joint operation in northern Baghdad.

tion here, and they were clearly excited to be out there."

Norrie remarked about the strengths and tenacity the police seemed to carry with them.

"The IP didn't have armored vehicles like the army had, but they were not afraid in the least," he said. "The Iraqis will take the fight to the insurgents. They're out on the streets every day despite some equipment and personnel issues, but they're out there . . . going after the bad guys."

"The mission was capturing the terrorist because they are harming the Iraqi people, and we will not allow them to do it," said one Iraqi police officer.

Norrie reported that locals in this area hadn't seen a policeman in almost two years. He said the showing of the police force returning to one of the deadliest places in the capital could bring a renewed hope to a city torn by sectarian violence.

"We hope to build momentum from this and get the guys they're after and other guys that are doing harm in the area," Norrie said. "All anybody wants is to protect the local populace. That's the key."

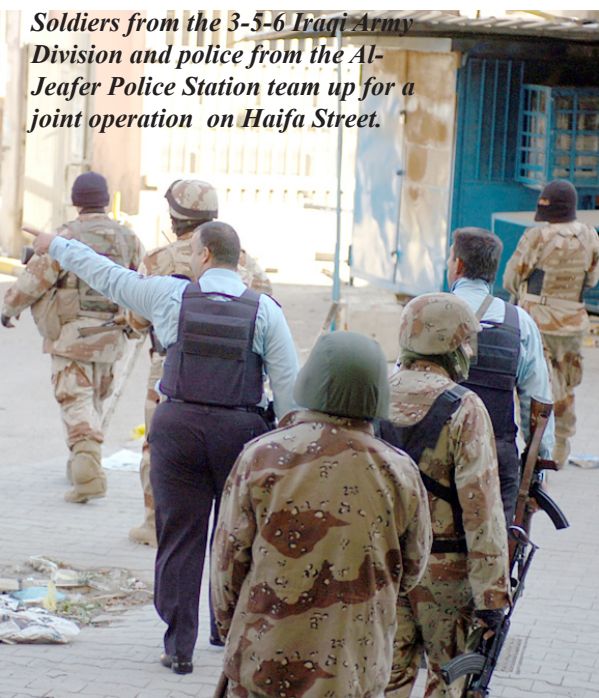
Norrie said his team's mission is of the utmost importance. The team works with the IA every day to ensure coalition effects are in place and help is readily available to aid the Iraqis in the fight against insurgents.

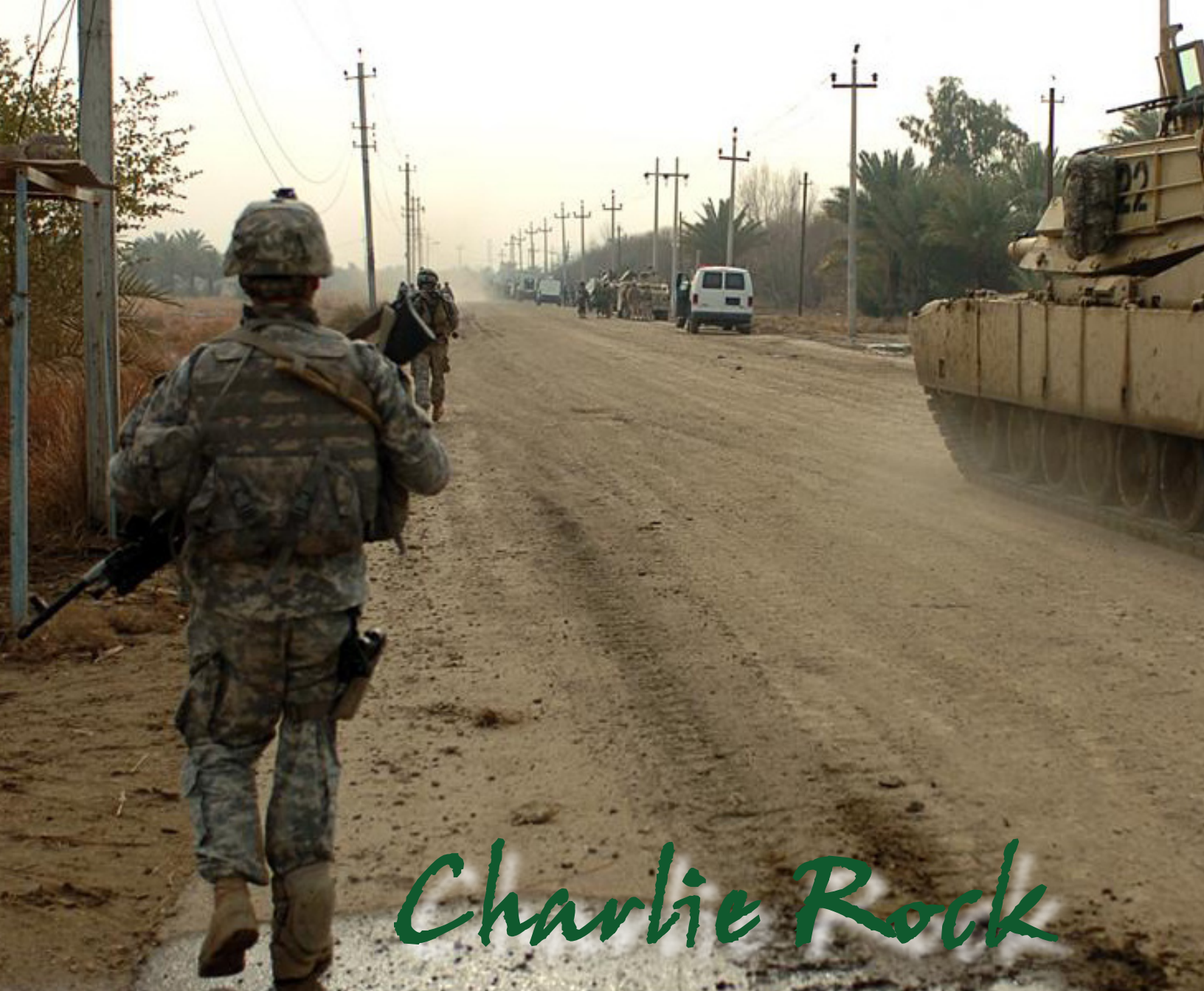
First Sgt. Joseph McFarlane from Traverse City, Mich., said that although the roles of the army and police differ, they find a common ground in wanting to see the streets become safer.

"For the people on the street, they see the American forces, the Iraqi Army and the police working together," McFarlane said. "It's great for them for sense of security. Hopefully they will open their arms to the police force as well as the Iraqi Army."

McFarlane concluded that confidence will continue to grow as the army, police and MiTT continue to conduct operations together.

Soldiers from the 3-5-6 Iraqi Army Division and police from the Al-Jeafer Police Station team up for a joint operation on Haifa Street.





Charlie Rock in the jungles of Baghdad

*Story and Photos by
Spc. Alexis Harrison*

Just east of the dense and urbanized Al-Doura district lays the rural Al-Boetha villages surrounded by date palms and thick underbrush. In recent weeks, the area had been thought of as a staging area for anti-Iraqi forces and insurgent activity.

Soldiers from 5-20 IN, part of Task Force 1-14 Cavalry attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division dismounted their Stryker combat ve-

hicles and trekked through the lush palm groves of the capital city in search of insurgent hideouts Jan. 11 and 12.

Although it was within the boundaries of the city, the flora and fauna was a stark contrast to urbanized terrain the Soldiers from "Charlie Rock" were used to. Nonetheless, the troopers marched on and combed the entire area.

Spc. William Nassaman, an infantry man from Bryan, Ohio, carried an M-240 during the entire mission. He said long foot patrols like this are tough, but



An M-1 Abrams Tank rolls past a Soldier on a dusty road during a sweep of the Al-Boetha District in Baghdad Jan. 11.

he carried the massive machine-gun with pride. He and his fellow comrades-in-arms shared stories and jokes throughout the test of their stamina. The troopers regarded their patrolling prowess to their pride as infantry men and the training they'd been through. While on the trek, the Soldiers came across two small villages just outside the cover of the tall palms. One was inhabited by people and the other abandoned and torn to ruins. The Soldiers along with the Iraqi National Police force searched the houses one-by-one. In one house, the Soldiers found a small, pellet-rifle. The house owner's

two sons proudly displayed their marksmanship in an orange-shooting competition with the Soldiers. The Soldiers paused for a few moments to share some fun with the young boys, but the mission and troops kept moving through the village.

After a thorough search the troops moved into the abandoned village in the grove. Here they found buildings crumbled to the ground and evidence of a fight. Dozens of shell casings and loose ammunition littered the ground at what was thought of as an insurgent's hideout.

Earlier at the populated village, the residents had complained of insurgents staging attacks from

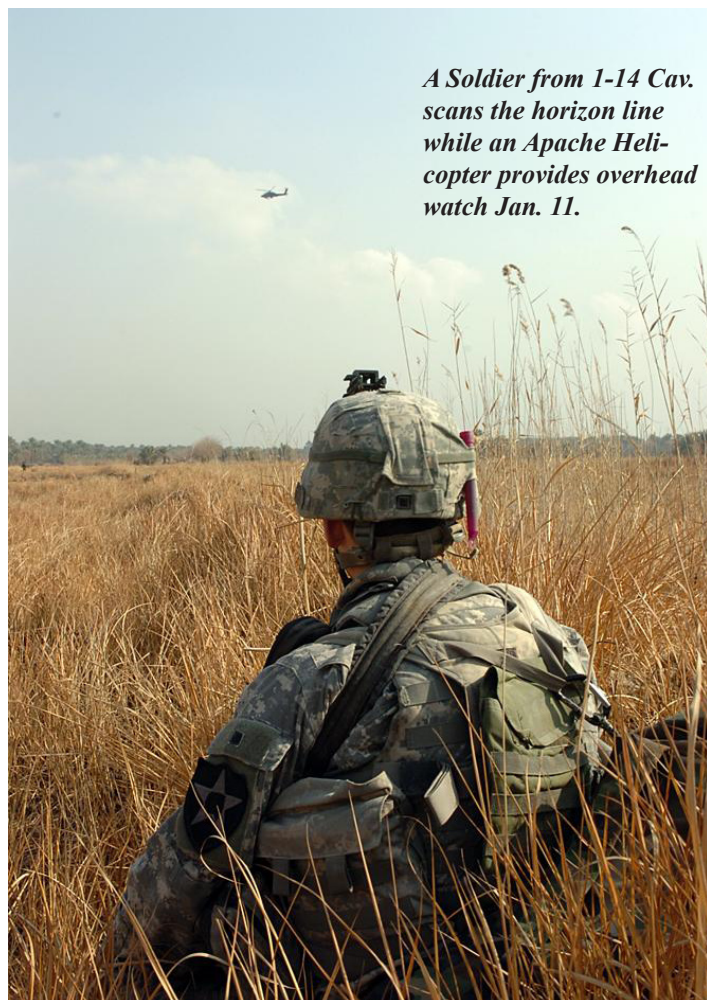
the abandoned buildings just a few hundred meters from their homes. To ensure no one would come into the abandoned buildings again, the engineers were called to crater the roads. With thundering resound, the explosives went off. The roads were secured.

Farther east, the Soldiers pushed further into the foliage, not knowing what to expect. A suspicious vehicle carrying several passengers was sighted in the area. Later it was found to have only one passenger and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher inside. Sgt. 1st Class Aron Alexander, 3rd Platoon's noncommissioned officer-in-charge, told his Soldiers to keep careful watch because there could be several men lurking in the jungle.

Through thick and thin, the Soldiers made their way to the western bank of the Tigris River. They came upon several makeshift shacks inhabited by families.

One of the families explained to the policemen and Soldiers that during the last few nights vehicles had been dropped off by men they didn't know. The vehicles were found stripped of most of their interior and without keys.

After the arduous journey to their eastern boundary, the Soldiers once again broke through the underbrush to the road where their vehicles had held the cordon of the area.



ICE TEAM ENGINEERS BAGHDAD'S FUTURE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS KAP KM



Capt. Marc Motyleski inspects a sewage pump site.

One the biggest efforts in rebuilding Baghdad is concentrating on the very things many have taken for granted: central services such as our sewer system; running, clean water; electricity; and trash removal.

In the past few years, many Iraqis have had to do without. So, the responsibility of helping bring all these services back to Baghdad has fallen on a few members of the "Black Jack" Brigade's Special Troops Battalion.

Members of the Infrastructure Coordination Element were formed due to their engineering background with each of them taking on a specific task.

Although 1st Lt. Andrew Webber, Headquarters Company, 2BSTB, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, is a Chemical officer back at Fort Hood, Texas, here in Iraq, he serves on the ICE as a project manager for water and sewer projects. Within his duties, he deals with municipalities and helps them develop plans and provides funding and a quality/control team to facilitate projects.

"When the city needs something done, we develop the scope and course of action," he said. "I also give the funding and supervise [the project]."

According to Capt. Marc Motyleski, the ICE officer-in-charge, the overall purpose of the ICE is to develop, manage, and synchronize both infrastructure,

such as the sewage, water, electric, and trash and large scale construction projects within the brigade's area of responsibility. The ICE is also the unit's primary liaison with the Amanat, or the Baghdad City government, local district utility directors, and outside agencies.

"Ultimately, it is the ICE's responsibility to interpret the commander's intent and develop a critical path that will accomplish the overall mission, which is to assist the Iraqi people in rehabilitating and reconstructing the city of Baghdad, in order to provide the local citizens a reliable and efficient infrastructure," said Motyleski of Woodbridge, Va. "To develop that critical path the Project Management team is required to synchronize our own efforts with those of the local government and outside agencies. This synchronization is vital in the development of a systematic and effective reconstruction plan that will ultimately meet the commander's intent."

According to Webber, a Raymond, Wash. native, the ICE Team usually deals with projects around the neighborhood of \$500,000 or less. Larger projects usually go to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Their mission takes them outside into the many different Baghdad muhalla's, or villages to different project sites such as sewage plants, electric plants, schools, clinics, and many others. He added that, with the help of the Iraqi site engineers, they are making a great impact on, not only the living standards of the people in Baghdad, but also on the security as well.

Within the southeastern part of Baghdad, the ICE is working on a landfill. According to Motyleski, it will be the largest one ever at 12,000 square meters, and should be able to satisfy the trash collection for a year for both the Al-Doura and Al-Rasheed areas.

It's helping out that makes the ICE Soldiers feel good about what they do, according to Motyleski.

"It's gets me out of the FOB (Forward Operating Base) and interacting with the locals," Motyleski said. "It just makes me feel like I have an effort in building a new life for these people."

Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Seidel hands out candy to the local children.



GUNNERS

STAY ALERT STAY LOW

STAY ALIVE

I CAN SAVE MY OWN LIFE



- * STAY LOW IN THE GUNNER'S SEAT
- * PERSONAL PROTECTION GEAR WORN

- * TOO HIGH
- * NO PROTECTION FROM SNIPERS OR IED
- * NO GOGGLES OR NOMEX GLOVES



Modeled By SGT Tommy House



Staff Sgt. Daniel Barker (foreground) and Staff Sgt. Sloan Sulham, both with Co. B, 2-12 IN, enter an abandoned building in Baghdad's Al-Doura neighborhood during a cordon and search mission.

2-12 Infantry and III Kings

*Story and Photos by
Cpl. Robert Yde*

Capt. Craig Evans summed up his unit's overall mission when he said, "Everything we do is a combined operation with the national police."

"Our partnership with the national police over the next year will be critical for the overall effort in the global war-on-terror," the Riverside, Calif. native explained. Evans, the Company B commander for 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, which is currently attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and his Soldiers have focused on assisting and advising the national police since arriving to Iraq in October.

Recently, Soldiers from Co. A and Co. B, 2-12 IN, along with members of the Iraqi National Police, teamed up for a three-day cordon and search mission in Baghdad's Al-Doura neighborhood. Dubbed "The Three Kings," the focus of the operation was to find weapons and explosives that insurgents have been using to target coalition forces in the area.

"We're looking for caches; any weapons or ammunition, and anything that can be used to make IEDs (improvised explosive devices)," explained Long Island, N.Y. native, Staff Sgt. Juan Hernandez with Co. A.

According to the Soldiers, this particular area of Al-Doura has been particularly problematic.

"Basically, we have our problems with them managing to smuggle in RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) rounds, mortar rounds and home-made explosives," explained 1st Lt. Jeremy Currin, a platoon leader with Co. A, 2-12 IN.

The unit constantly conducts patrols through this neighborhood and has found weapon caches there in the past.

"The last time we were in the same vicinity we found 80 pounds of home-made explosives and stuff that they were using to make roadside bombs," said Staff Sgt. Sloan Sulham, a platoon sergeant with Co. B.

Although the Soldiers patrol the area daily, during this operation they closed off sections of the neighborhood so they could more thoroughly examine the numerous abandon houses and buildings.

Members of the INP were involved in every aspect of the mission, with the Soldiers providing guidance and supervision along the way.

Before beginning the mission, the Soldiers checked each of the police officers to ensure that they were properly equipped for the mission.

“We do it before every time we go out to make sure they have enough ammo and everything works on their weapon,” said Sgt. Michael Martinez, a team leader with Co. B. “We have to enforce it on these guys so they know every time when we go out on a mission they have the essential stuff that they need.”

In the short time that he has been working with the INP, Martinez said he has noticeably seen an improved understanding by the police officers of what they need to have to effectively operate.

The San Diego native, said that each time they go out, he is finding less deficiencies with police officers during his pre-mission checks.

Once the Soldiers ensured that the police officers had everything they needed, the two groups convoyed together into Al-Doura.

After arriving at their objective area, Soldiers with Co. B established an outer cordon to secure the area. While the Soldiers set up concertina wire and put down orange traffic cones, the INP took up positions along the street corners of the eight-block area, scanning the roads and rooftops.

Once the area was secured, Co. A moved in with their contingent of INPs to begin the search.

They focused their efforts on searching the abandoned houses in the area.

According to Currin, many of the residents in the area have left out of fear.

“A lot of times they leave in a hurry and leave everything they have,” he explained. “They’ll get death threats put on their door telling them to leave or they’re going to get killed.”

The Soldiers hope that their constant presence in the area will help ease such fears, and it gives them an opportunity to talk with the local people and let them know that they are there to help.

“We’ll engage the populace and ask them how they feel about the neighborhood; what troubles they have as far as essential services,” Evans said.

As they made their way from house to

house, the Soldiers stood back, assuming an advisory role, while the INP led the searches.

“I’ve had no incidents with them as far as not being willing to search or not willing to do a job,” Sulham remarked of the INP. “They seem to be motivated and willing to do whatever you ask them to do.”

National Police Officer Nidel Kads Hassa said that the relationship between the INP and the Soldiers has been constructive and will hopefully help him reach his long-term goal for his country.

“I hope I can see one Iraq and we all live in peace and it’s safe for everybody,” he said through a translator.

This sentiment seemed to be shared by many of the police officers, who said they serve out of duty to their country.

Even though the police officers and Soldiers found nothing major on this day, they said they will continue to constantly patrol this neighborhood and every time they go out, the INP will take on a little more responsibility.

“Last time I did a joint patrol I started letting them pick targets with their own intel,” Sulham said. “We’re trying to let them take the lead.”

Staff Sgt. Juan Hernandez, Co. A, 2-12 IN, searches a hole for illegal weapons during a cordon and search mission in Baghdad’s Al-Doura neighborhood.



Living **THE LEGEND**
Official Magazine of 2BCT, 1CD

PHOTO ALBUM





4-9 SOLDIERS KEEP WATCHFUL EYE

Pvt. Sean Goodman scans the horizon during his shift atop a guard tower on FOB Prosperity.

Story and Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison

Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, Soldiers from 4-9 Cav., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, keep watch over the base and every single entry point into the International Zone. They know it isn't glamorous, but they know it's as vital as any other mission the "Black Jack" Brigade performs.

At all hours of the day and night, someone is watching traffic and pedestrians from atop a guard tower. That someone is a trooper like Pfc. Estanislado Bella from Miami. Bella, who is a part of Troop A, 4-9 Cav., said that if he and his friends weren't in the towers, there's no telling what might happen.

"It's one of those jobs that if it's not done, somebody's life could be at risk," Bella said. "We see a lot from up here [in the tower]. It's also a good opportunity to get to know your fellow Soldiers. It helps with the cohesiveness of the unit."

Staying up all night isn't the easiest thing to accomplish, but Spc. Yosef Spell from Philadelphia, also a part of Troop A, said working as a team can help you get through those cold Iraqi nights.

"It's a lot like a football team," he said. "You have to work together to get things done."

Spell recently helped out a friend in a big way. His friend is married to another Soldier in the 13th Sustainment Command out of Fort Hood, Texas. In order for the two to see each other on their mid-tour leave, Spell volunteered his slot, so his buddy could be with his wife.

"A lot of us are really close, but we work together no matter what," Spell said.

Outside the base, on the outskirts of the IZ, there are Soldiers manning checkpoints at every possible entry route. These Soldiers don't sit inside a guard tower and wait for something to happen. They get a

hands-on view of every vehicle and person that comes inside the gates.

Soldiers from Troop B, 4-9 Cav., pay attention to the little details while doing their jobs. Some search people, some search cars and trucks, and some pull security while watching the ebb and flow of Iraqis coming and going.

The troops keep watch while an Iraqi soldier does an initial search of the vehicles coming through the gates.

After the car advances, a trooper from 4-9 Cav. continues the identification checks and preliminary searches through the car and its occupant.

The several steps of security aren't meant to frustrate incoming persons or impede traffic. The Soldiers from the "Blackhawk" Troop check, check and recheck for anything on the "bolo" list. Things like weapons, munitions and explosives are on the "do not try to bring into the IZ" list among other things.

Cpl. Karl Sweeting, a medic from Houston, is on his second tour to Iraq. He's been busy manning the gates into the IZ.

Although he hasn't had to perform many medical duties while working, he said he still feels a sense of accomplishment after every day at work.

Pfc. Nicholas Jefferson works alongside Sweeting at one of the northern checkpoints. The Van Buren, Ark., native said he's not in the thick of things like a cavalry scout wants to be, but he knows what his mission is.

"I wish there was something more we could be doing," he said. "But, I know that this is our mission, so we're going to do the best we can to keep all the important people and people who want to make this place better from getting hurt."



1-14 CAV SOLDIERS ASSIST INP IN ABU DISCHER



*Story and Photos by
Cpl. Robert Yde*

For the past five months, Soldiers with the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Lewis, Wash., now attached to the Fort Hood, Texas based 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, have focused much of their efforts on training members of the Iraqi National Police.

The two forces have conducted numerous, joint operations with the coalition forces in the lead and the INP taking on a little more responsibility each time out.

“Up to this point, we’ve been planning all the operations,” Troop C commander, Capt. Adam Grim explained of the partnership between his Soldiers and the INP.

However, the focus of these operations has shifted recently with increasing efforts concentrated on turning over added security responsibilities to Iraqi forces.

Police officers with the National Police’s 6th

Brigade took major steps toward this goal during missions conducted Dec. 8 and 9. While members of the INP have been involved in the execution of previous missions, the cordon and

search operations conducted on these two days were planned exclusively by the INP.

“The National Police have planned this operation and they want us to assist them by doing the outer cordon mission,” Grim, a native of Orange Park, Fla. said.

Both days, 1-14 Cav. Soldiers secured the objective areas chosen by the INP while the police officers went from house to house searching for weapons and suspected insurgents. While small teams of Soldiers accompanied the INPs during the search operations, they were there merely to observe and provide feedback if asked.

The first target area the INPs selected to search was a small section of the Abu Dischir neighborhood Dec. 8.

“It’s mainly Shia,” Grim said of Abu Dischir, “and there’s been a high level of sectarian violence in that area.”

The INPs, accompanied by Soldiers from Troop C, spent several hours searching homes and talking with the local residents, and while the searches turned up nothing on this morning, the mission was deemed a success as the police officers were met with little defiance by the populace.

Grim said that this was important as coalition and INP forces continue to build relationships with the locals and show them that they are dedicated to providing a secure environment.

The next day the INP forces targeted a much larger area in the neighborhood of Heg Al Seha and were assisted by Soldiers from Troop A.

According to one National Police Officer, 1st Sgt. Firas Kalel Abraham, this area also has been challenging with a large amount of sectarian violence.

“We want to clean up this area and help these people,” he said through an interpreter.

The mission ran much like the one the day before, with coalition forces providing the outer cordon and small teams of Soldiers accompanying the police officers through the neighborhood.

However, this time INP forces were able to detain four suspected terrorists and confis-



Staff Sgt. Roger Burwell (left) and Capt. Adam Grim examine a rifle found during a cordon and search operation

Staff Sgt Roger Burwell with Troop C, 1-14 Cav., looks on while a captain with the INP talks to a local in Abu Dischir.



cate several rifles and miscellaneous electronic equipment that could be used for bomb making.

"They're really good at searching these homes," Capt. Patrick Patterson, a platoon leader with Troop A said of the INP. "They know where insurgents typically like to hide things and so they go right for those places first." Not only did the INP perform well during the search operations, but they showed improvements in other areas as well.

"They are normally dependent on the U.S. forces for things like food and water, but they haven't asked us for anything this time," explained Cpl. David Duitsman, a team leader from Palmdale, Calif.

While this self-reliance is what coalition forces have been working toward, Patterson said that sometimes it is hard for his Soldiers to step back from a situation and take on the role of an observer. "We've been doing it for so long that sometimes it's a bad habit of ours to take charge," the Canton, Ohio native explained. "So we've got to kick the crutch out

from underneath them and let them walk on their own."

The police officers did not appear to mind, and seemed excited about their mission and their added responsibilities.

"They're minds are in the right place," said Portland, Ore. native Staff Sgt. David Forney, a section leader with Troop A. "They're really motivated and eager to learn."

With the enthusiasm they have demonstrated, Grim said that he believes that the INPs will continue to make steady improvements as they now focus on turning away from training on simpler tasks and concentrate on more complex ones such as mission planning.

"It started off with simple things," Grim explained. "We first had to train them not to have their weapons on fire or their fingers on the triggers during patrols. Now we don't have these problems, and we're progressing to the higher level things like training them to plan and then executing that plan."

On the Road Again...

15th BSB's Combat Logistical Patrol keeps supplies comin'

*Story and Photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim*

While most Soldiers are asleep, a small contingency of the 15th Brigade Support Battalion carries out the mission of supplying the rest of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Almost every morning, even before zero-dark-thirty, Soldiers from the "Gambler" Battalion, mount up to deliver fuel, food, auto parts, and any needed supplies to the surrounding base camps in a mission they call "The Clip," or Combat Logistical Patrol.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Vieira, 15th BSB's commander, said that the supplying of other bases is a "deliberate" process and is at the forefront of the battalion's list of missions in theater.

The supplying mission, which comes with its list of dangers, is done quietly in the night because they want to limit the hazards and be able to get the necessary supplies to the Soldiers as safely as possible, according to 2nd Lt. Desiree Breaux, one of the convey commanders and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th BSB executive officer.

"We do this early in the morning because there is hardly anyone on the road during this time," said the Mandeville, La. native.

There are, however, those who have the title of convoy protector: the Gun Truck crew members.

Soldiers like Spc. Joshua Greves, a heavy equipment operator with Company B from Auburn, Calif., push the thoughts of danger to the side in order to get the precious cargo to its final destination. Greves serves in the top of a humvee turret as the gunner.

Greves said there is extra pride in what he and others in the Gun Truck Platoon do, not only because of the inherent dangers associated with it, but also because the job itself isn't a traditional Army occupation, and in most cases, it was something the platoon had to train for before their deployment.


"For all the gun truck platoon, we take great pride in what we do because we do come from all over," he said. "This is not an MOS (Military Occupational Speciality)."

Yet, what ended in pride didn't start off that way.

"In the beginning, it was hard," said Greves. "Everyone here is new; everyone was bringing little things they learned from other units [they've been assigned to]."

Then, he said, they got together and started doing it their way, created their own standards, and now they are making it work.

"We still have our gripes and grievances, but as soon as your rhino crosses that gate, it's about protecting everyone in the truck, in front, behind . . . because we are the PSD (personal se-



*15th BSB vehicles head out of FOB
Falcon on a late night CLP*

curity detachment) for the CLP,” said Greves.

For Greves, who finds himself in his second Iraq deployment, ensuring that his platoon sergeant has zero worries about vehicle maintenance is also tops on his list. His fellow Soldiers in the platoon joke that he is very attentive to his humvee. Yet, Greves takes that to heart. He said he babies his “truck” like he does his real truck back home.

After the afternoon mission brief, Greves goes back to his humvee and spends a few hours examining it from bumper to bumper. It’s a ritual he has come to call his “quiet time.”

“Listening to my truck to see if it has any problems, that’s my quiet time,” he explained. “I use that time to go through the entire truck. I do a lot of tests with the turret. When it comes down to it, it’s just PMCS, PMCS, PMCS (Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services).”

During the hours of darkness on the different roads the CLPs go through, Greves keeps a roving eye on every part of the road he can.

The one addition he made to the outside of his humvee, makes it stand out a little more than most the ones in his platoon. He has outfitted almost every side of the humvee with big, bright halogens.

“My biggest thing is lights,” he

said. “If I don’t see it, it might get me.”

Greves’ way of thinking has proven safe throughout dozens of missions during the time the 2nd “Black Jack” Brigade has been in Iraq.

Yet, he also credits his buddy, Spc. Joshua Boal, a machinist assigned to Co. B and from Olanta, Penn., with keeping a good eye on things in the lead vehicle.

Boal, who also is an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran said he jumped at the chance of going back on a gun truck when the battalion was forming the teams up.

“I just feel comfortable on the road,” he said. “A lot of people say it’s more dangerous ... but when I get in the turret, I’m in a zone. I’m in the lead gun truck.”

He attributes his love for the job to one thing: saving lives. “I’ve been on over 100 convoys, firefights ... I’ve been the spear point of a lot of the convoys. Scared? I don’t think about it. I’ll handle it in the rear. I figure, I can’t control it.”

For Boal, who has only spent a total of three hours working in a machinist workshop, along with the prestige of riding in “truck one,” he has assigned it with a huge responsibility.

“I know, in my heart I do my best [when I’m out there],” he said. “If it means I die – then I die, but at least I’ll have saved other people.”

Fallen Heroes



*SSG Kristofer Ciraso
1-5 Cav*



*SPC Robert Volker
1-5 Cav*



*SGT Jae Moon
2-12 Inf*



*PV2 Joshua Burrows
1-8 Cav*



*SSG Henry Kahalewai
1-14 Cav*

Always wear ballistic goggles



Photo of Charge by SPC Kane Huff, 2DCI, ICD Public Affairs November 2006



Photo of Palace by SPC Kane Huff, 2DCI, ICD Public Affairs November 2006

Wear Flame Retardant Gloves Only

Greetings from

FOB Prosperity

Al-Salam, Black Jack Headquarters

Baghdad, Iraq



Baghdad, Iraq

FOB Prosperity - Black Jack Headquarters OJF 06-08